DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 900 HE 030 497

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TITLE Higher Education: A Critical Business.
INSTITUTION Society for Research into Higher Education, Ltd., London (England).
ISBN ISBN-0-335-19703-5
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 196p.
AVAILABLE FROM Open University Press/Taylor & Francis, 1900 Frost Rd., Suite 101, Bristol, PA 19007-1598; phone: 800-821-8312; fax: 215-785-5515 ($29.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Cognitive Development; Cognitive Processes; *Concept Formation; Creative Thinking; Critical Theory; *Critical Thinking; Divergent Thinking; Educational Philosophy; *Epistemology; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Individual Development; Reflective Teaching; Rhetorical Criticism; Self Actualization; Self-Concept; Self Congruence; Social Action; Social Change; Social Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Current concepts of critical thinking need to be reconstrued into the much broader concept of "critical being" and applied to higher education. Under this construct, critical persons (students) become more than just critical thinkers; they engage critically with the world and with themselves; they not only reflect critically on knowledge, but also develop powers of critical self-reflection and critical action. Concurrent with the concept of critical being is a form of social and personal epistemology; the belief that through higher education students can be changed as persons by their experiences. Argument of this thesis, directed largely to the British university system, is broken down into three parts which are presented in three sections. In the first section, critical thinking is "rethought," the conditions of critical thought are defined, and critical theory, discourse, and critical potential are examined. In the second section, the argument moves toward a definition of critical being, with discussions of its impact on higher education, critical action, critical self-reflection, and an appropriate curriculum. The final section looks at critical thought in a corporate world, at critical professionalism, at academics as intellectuals, and at critical thinking for a learning society. Appended are a brief coda on critical space and glossary. (Contains approximately 150 references.) (CH)

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